

THE שקל SHEKEL



The Journal of Israel and Jewish History and Numismatics
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LET MY PEOPLE GO!:



BADGES WITH THE NAMES OF PRISONERS OF ZION



FEATURING:

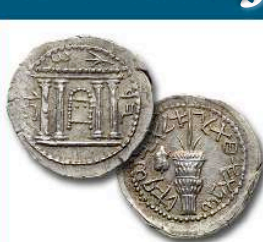
TIME, CALENDARS, MEDALS, AND JEWS by Ira Rezak

THE HISTORY OF THE ODESSER AWARD by Robert D. Leonard Jr.

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CHAYA SARA OPPENHEIM, EDITOR

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

My talk on Christian Hebraists and the new catalog went well. I am planning on preparing an exhibit next year illustrating the different commemorative series and subseries to help publicize the catalog. I sent out drafts to several members right after the talk, and revised them once I had most of the mint sets finished. I think there will probably be new revisions every few months as I finish up the variety of specialty mint sets from the past decade, then start on the commemoratives. I recently discovered the Numismaster website has updated Krause catalog numbers for Israel coin and notes which I am using in my catalog, but they are missing some and don't have all the photos, so I will send them updates and corrections.

My exhibit on Israel's money and idolatry took second place at the ANA's World's Fair of Money in Middle East (it lost to an exhibit that ended up winning best of show). This included a number of modern Israel coins, including the circulating commemoratives with the photo-like images. My exhibit on *heb* amulets engraved on coins took first place for the second time, so I can no longer exhibit it at ANA. I plan to eventually follow up with an exhibit on *Shaday* engraved on coins.

It is also not too late to write your representative and senator to ask them to support or cosponsor HR7865 which amends the Convention on Cultural Property Implementation Act to facilitate the lawful trade and collecting of numismatic materials. The bill was introduced in April. It basically puts the burden of proof on the Customs Service to show imported coins were acquired illegally from an archeological site or contrary to the laws of the exporting country. ☐

Simcha Kuritzky

TIME, CALENDARS, MEDALS, AND JEWS

By Ira Rezak

The reckoning of time is important for Jews as for virtually all organized societies. The sun, moon and stars, understood as heavenly bodies have long been understood as conveying meanings as symbols and as chronological signposts. Judaism and its close successor Christianity both depend on the annual celestial cycles to reckon time explicitly for the purpose of properly carrying out their religious obligations. Secular activities too have come to be arranged, some might say too rigidly, by an established temporal order. The passage and memorialization of lives and societal events also depend on the calculus and systematization of time. Symbols and notations for ordering and recording time's cycles have consequently long been a familiar part of human affairs. Calendars have become preferred instruments for tracking and promulgating the passage of time in terms of days, weeks, month and years. It is of interest that the etymology of the English word "calendar", though deriving most immediately from Latin roots philologically, points to an analogy with Jewish calendrical practice. Jews in ancient times proclaimed every month upon witnessing the first appearance of a crescent new moon; so also did the Romans. The Latin word *calare* means "to call out", in effect

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to formally proclaim the new moon just as the Jews did; thus, the word *calendae* became the word for the first day of the month in the Roman calendar. The Latin term *calendarium* then came to refer to a written register because business debts were settled on the first day of the month. This term was adopted into French and subsequently into its current meaning English during the Middle Ages. The brief essay will illustrate a number of instances where symbolization, recording, or documentation of time has been related to Jews or Jewish interests in the medium of medals.



Shekel Pseudo-coin (probably 16th century), 31 mm, silver.

Medallic pseudocoins (imaginary fantasies or copies of ancient Jewish shekel coins) have been minted in many forms since the 16th century. Though most are believed to have originated in non-Jewish settings, some few, particularly ones with well-preserved and legible Hebrew

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letter forms may well derive from Jewish sources. One particularly rare and early variant bearing on its obverse the standard inscription **ירושלים הקדושה** also displays symbols for the sun, moon and stars, heavenly elements of both chronological and religious significance in Judaism; indeed, the Jewish calendrical system is explicitly based upon the relationship between the cyclical motions of these celestial bodies. Five hundred years later two modern Israeli medals depict the zodiac as symbolizing the passage of time in commemorating the state's thirteenth Bar Mitzvah year of existence in 1961, and then its twenty-fifth anniversary as a state in 1973. The latter of these two medals copies the specific zodiacal forms found on the mosaic floor of the ancient synagogue at Beit Alpha, once again emphasizing the Jewish traditional calendrical relationship to stellar arrays in a religious context.



Israel, Bar Mitzvah of the State, 1961, 45 mm, bronze.

Continued



Israel, 25th Anniversary of the State, 1973, 45 mm, silver.

A Jewish medal from Denmark commemorating a Sefardi couple's 25th wedding anniversary toward the end of the 18th century incorporates two temporal references, giving the Hebrew birth dates of both spouses as 5513 (1753) on the reverse while on the obverse side symbolizing life's span as either long (Lange), a torch held aloft, or late (Spaet), with the torch cast down. Another Jewish wedding-related medal, this from Berlin, shows Isaac meditating and praying (Genesis 24:63) just prior to his first meeting his future wife, Rebecca. The date here is recorded using the classical Jewish format for a chronogram, by placing dots over certain letters in the Hebrew text to indicate the numerical value of these letters. The sum of the seven letters so marked on this medal, 544, yields a Jewish date of (5)544, the equivalent of 1784 CE. While neither of the above examples is what we would describe as calendrical, strictly speaking, they

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illustrate Jewish methods for symbolizing the passage of time in human life and for recording specific dates.



Denmark, De Castro-Abensur anniversary, (probably 1778),
35 mm, silver.

The earliest printed, as opposed to manuscript, paper calendar is believed to have been published in 1448; imprinted calendars of the type we are accustomed to receiving in the mail today at little or no cost today are a much more recent phenomenon, barely a century old. Calendars in the form of medals, convenient for merchants and tradesmen to carry personally, however, are known from the late 17th century onward and are still produced to the present day. Of course, it would be impossible to list all 365 days of a year on a single portable medal, so typical calendar medals fall into two general forms: those listing specific holy occasions for a particular year, which include

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Sundays for Christian communities, and those that have a mechanical dial form which, when manipulated, allow for the correlation between days of the week and of varied months for several years, or even perpetually.

Entirely Jewish calendrical medals are few and far between.

One example in silver plated bronze, issued by Keren Hayesod in Austria for the Jewish year 5697-5698 (1937), has some actual full monthly pages conventionally arrayed. Four of the months appear in normal format on one side of the medal while the other side presents three separate templates bearing the names of either two or three different months that have similar date/day-of-the-week arrangements. This medal was very likely distributed as a token of appreciation to those who contributed to Keren Hayesod in 1937, the year prior to the Anschluss subordinating Austria to Nazi Germany.



Germany (Berlin), Isaac & Rebecca probably a wedding commemorative), 1784, 29 mm, silver.

Continued



Austria, Keren Hayesod/calendar, 1937, 39 mm, silvered bronze.

Two earlier silver German-language calendar medals were designed primarily for Christian use but incorporate Jewish holiday information because they were intended to be sold where Jewish merchants would also need such personal pocket calendars. As earlier noted, the specification of dates linked to Sundays was important religiously to Christians since for them Sunday was dominical, the Lord's Day, but such notation also indicated a day of general secular inactivity. Additionally, of course, specifying Sundays easily allowed extrapolation of dates for other days of the week throughout the year.

Continued



Germany, Hamburg Calendar Medal (Abramson), 1805, 45 mm, silver.

One such medal labelled HAMBURG CALENDAR and dated 1805 uses the basic method previously described by grouping several months having Sundays on the same dates; also, this medal gives the number of days in each month. A semi-circular array at the lower half of the medal's obverse lists the dates of the new and of the full moon for each group of months, which would be of particular interest to Jews whose Rosh Hodesh (New Month) prayers are linked to the new moon and several of whose holidays are linked to the mid-month full moon. More specifically, however, major Jewish holiday and their dates are noted to the right: Jued(ische) Ost(ern), that is, Pesach; Pfingsten), that is Shavuot; Versoehn(ung), that is Yom Kippur; and Laubh(uet), that is Succot. Below, Juden Neujahr, that is,

Continued

the day of Rosh Hashanah, is given for the year 5566. Of course, Christian holiday dates are also present on the left side of the main calendar, this being an issue aimed at Christians and Jews alike. The reverse side of the medal has other Christian noteworthy dates but the main display is a table listing the hours at which the City gates were to be opened and closed, another statistic of particular interest to Jews many of whom who traded in Hamburg during the day but were residents in nearby Altona since they did not have domiciliary privileges in Hamburg itself. This medal, as well as a somewhat similar variety for the year 1804, though for use in Hamburg, was actually manufactured in Berlin in the atelier of the well-known Jewish medalist, Abraham Abramson (1754-1811).



Germany, Berlin Calendar Medal (Loos), 1804/5565, 47 mm, silver.

Continued

A second silver medal of this general type was also made in Berlin for use in that city at the establishment of an equally well-known medallist, Daniel Friedrich Loos (1735-1819), a competitor of Abramson. This obverse of this medal for the year 1804/5565 is arranged circularly with a sunburst motive at its center. Months which have the same dates for Sundays are again grouped together. The Christian holidays are arrayed at the upper half of the medal and the Jewish holidays and their dates are in the lower half. Juedische Ostern, Pfingsten, Neuj(ahr), Versoehnung and Lauberhuet are mostly fully spelled out as is Zerstoerung Jerusalems, that is, Tisha B'Av. The reverse side of the medal is extraordinarily complex. In columnar array each month is listed with hours of sunrise and sunset, the days of the new moon, full moon, and its first and last quarters, as well as predictions for the expected number of sunny days! Additionally, the solstices and equinoxes are given above, and even the days when the King's, Queen's and Crown Prince's birthdays are to be celebrated along with the dates of the King's ascension, and the Crown Prince's coronation.

Continued



England, E. Moses Calendar Medal, 1853, 40 mm, white metal.

These two silver medals were commercial issues, likely priced at two to five thalers each; given their complexity, however, the purchasers certainly got their money's worth. A completely different story is that of the calendar medal issue by E. Moses in a different time and place and under very different circumstances. Elias Moses (1783-1868), born in Southern England, the son of an immigrant Alsatian peddler, who built up a remarkably successful clothing establishment in central London. Moses, along with several other Jewish clothing merchants, was an innovator in low-margin, high turnover sales, what we would today call discount marketing techniques, for ready-made clothes. As part of his aggressive advertising campaign Moses issued white metal calendrical medals as give-aways over a several-year period. These were essentially storecards embellished by a one-year calendar of Sunday dates variously

Continued

supplemented by obverses with designs of popular appeal. Thus, one of his medals with a calendar for 1853 featured a portrait of the recently deceased Duke of Wellington who had died the previous September. It is interesting to note that no Jewish content appeared on his calendar medals even though Moses, who was a member of the orthodox London Great Synagogue, elsewhere prominently published the fact that his establishment would be closed during the Jewish sabbath.



England, John Ashby, Stock Broker, c 1825, 33 mm, bronze.



England, Ashby & Young, Stock Brokers, c 1835, 33 mm, bronze.

Continued

Apart from the retail clothing industry, prominent Jews in Great Britain were best known for their financial enterprise. The bronze advertising token of John Ashby, a Christian stockbroker, issued c 1824, records his address and gives a calendrical listing of “fixed holidays”, what today are called bank holidays, including traditional Christian festivals and secular national celebrations. But of considerable Jewish interest are bold images on both sides of Ashby’s storecard of the traditional bull and bear symbols representing aggressive versus cautious investment behavior. The bullish illustration has the visage of Nathan Mayer Rothschild; his optimistic boldness indicated, in the absence of horns, by a dramatically elevated head and a prominent display of genitalia. The more tentative, decidedly downwardly oriented bear features the head of Moses Mocatta. These two Jewish stockbrokers both traded with Ashby and were widely admired in their day, so it is believed that these caricatures are indicative of admiration rather than being in any way antisemitic. A similar storecard, issued a few years later c 1834 by the successor firm Ashby & Young again lists the dates of fixed holidays (slightly altered from those on the earlier example) and again displays the bull and bear images with the faces of Rothschild and Mocatta. For reasons that are unclear, both animals are now depicted in decidedly more serene poses.

Continued



New Zealand, Joseph Nathan & Co Calendar, 1904, 37 mm, aluminum.

The tradition of commercial advertisement in calendrical form continued into the 20th century. In Wellington, the capitol of New Zealand, Joseph Nathan, a Jewish merchant dealing in butter and dried milk, issued a calendar medal of a form entirely different from those previously discussed - a mechanical device made of aluminum with moving parts designed to display correlated dates and days of the week for a period of 21 years, from 1904, the date of presumed issue, until 1925. This calendar, as did earlier examples, groups several months together that have similar day-of-the-week/date combinations and requires maneuvering a pierced circular mask bearing dates and months over a base plate impressed with sequences of years and days of the week. A Jewish manufacturer of calculating machines in

Continued

Paris, L. Neuman and Company, operating under the brand name Cerveau d'Acier (brain of steel), issued a similarly organized calendar medal also covering a cycle of 21 years, here 1922-1943. Considering the unfortunate destiny of many Jews in France toward the end of this particular calendar's expected time frame one may well wonder about the fate of some of its intended or actual users.



France, L. Neuman & Cie Calendar, 1922, 40 mm, aluminum.

Finally, we can consider a modern pair of Israeli calendrical medals that lack any evidence of advertisement and presumably were sold commercially. Both examples were struck with an intrinsic loop, thus either to be worn as a pendant or, more likely, to be affixed to a key chain. Both provide the specific dates for major Jewish holidays, each for a specific year. The first references 1959-1960 obviously a single Jewish year which, however, is not specifically

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named. The calendrical language is English as is the system for recording the particular numerical dates. All the holidays listed are religious, the single exception being the inclusion of Independence Day, here the 2nd of May. The other side of the medal shows a map of Israel with the Sea of Galilee, the Dead Sea, and the Jordanian West Bank area being the only details outlined. The Hebrew text **כי מציון תצא תורה** (For Torah will come from Zion) and the English word “Jerusalem” make it likely that this pendant medal was intended as a souvenir for visitors to Israel. The second example, dated 1960-1961 but also specified as **תשכ"א** (5721), similarly arrays the same holidays, but records them all in Hebrew with the dates again conventionally given in Arabic numerals. The second side of this version depicts Rachel's Tomb and, somewhat incongruously, has the Hebrew inscriptions **ירושלים** (Jerusalem,) and also **ושבו בנים לגבולם** (and children will come back to their borders). So again, this piece appears to be a touristic souvenir, albeit for people more familiar with Hebrew.

Continued



Israel, Calendar Medal, 1959-1960, 35 mm, bronze.



Israel, Calendar Medal, 1960-1961/5721, 35 mm, silvered bronze.

In conclusion, this essay has illustrated and described several ways that Jewish time has been represented and notated in medallionic form. Some abstractly depict the natural phenomenon that underly the systematization of the Jewish year, others exemplify the conventional Jewish method of

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annual notation, yet others list individual holidays by name and date - all contribute to the form we recognize as calendars. The principal motivation for the creation, and distribution of calendrical medals has been convenience, advertisement, and profitability; their utility as personal aids to memory accounts for their persistence over centuries. Though not much described in this article, the overwhelming majority of such products were designed for use in Christian and secular contexts; those discussed above, incorporating specific Jewish references, are decidedly rare.



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THE HISTORY OF THE BEN AND SYLVIA ODESSER AWARD

By Robert D. Leonard Jr.

It's been over a decade since the story of TAMS' Ben and Sylvia Odesser Award was presented in *The Shekel*, so we are probably overdue for an update.



Saul Needleman, PhD (left) and Robert D. Leonard Jr. (right)

Ben Odesser of Chicago and later Skokie, Illinois (December 27, 1910 – January 9, 1990), was an active member, exhibitor, and vest-pocket dealer at several Chicago-area coin clubs from the 1950s through the 1980s, and a regular attendee at the annual ANA summer convention. Ben was interested in all coins, tokens, and medals and founded the Chicago Coin Bourse in 1962,

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which he conducted monthly until his death, but his primary loves were tokens, medals, and Judaic numismatics.

According to his obituary in the April 1990 *TAMS Journal*, “He was adept at locating scarce items in a wide range of series. In later years, he simply mailed these to specialists, without a price other than a request to send ‘whatever they are worth.’ ‘And you know,’ he said, ‘they always send me more than I would have asked for them.’”

In 1961, Ben became charter member No. 27 of the Token and Medal Society. He was a Governor of TAMS continuously from 1964 until the time of this death (except when serving as Treasurer, 1966-1972); as of that time, no other officer approached him in length of service. His obituary stated, “Ben was seen at virtually every board meeting, general meeting, and banquet in the history of TAMS, wearing his trademark Green Beret from the time they were presented at the 1966 banquet through 1989. Though never much of a dedicated researcher, he contributed five articles to the *TAMS Journal* from 1970 through 1978. He was also a frequent supplier of attributions for maverick tokens over the years.”

After his beloved wife Sylvia died of cancer in 1978, Ben honored her memory by establishing the **Sylvia Odesser Award For Judaic Numismatics and Exonumia**,

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presenting the first award personally at the 1979 TAMS banquet; Ben was the sole judge and presenter. The award was funded by a substantial donation to TAMS. Many distinguished numismatists were so honored.

Originally Ben's intent was to recognize outstanding exhibitors of Judaic exnumia (broadly defined – coin club “show and tell” exhibits were considered). But Judaic exonomic exhibits became scarcer, particularly after the collapse of the American Israel Numismatic Association (AINA) member clubs and its Greater New York Coin Convention in the later 1970s and 1980s. At some point the award began to be conferred on the writer of the best article in *The Shekel*, and in recent years this has become standard.

After Ben's death TAMS renamed the award the **Ben and Sylvia Odesser Award**, continuing to present plaques from Ben's original endowment. At first Moe Weinschel headed a committee of collectors who were members of both AINA and TAMS to determine the winners, and he attended the TAMS banquet to make the presentation, but after his death October 16, 2001, TAMS President Cindy Grellman (Wibker) asked me, as a past Odesser Award winner, to take over, and I have been involved ever since.

Continued

On learning that the award had changed from Judaic exhibiting to the best article in a non-TAMS publication, I resolved to increase TAMS' involvement and emphasize Judaic exonomia, if possible. First having made a list of all Odesser Award winners, I established the following approach: (1) examine every issue of *The Shekel* for the previous year; (2) review the articles, eliminating any written by previous winners (only one person, Ed Janis, had ever received the Odesser Award twice, before my time – I refused to accept it a second time myself); (3) rank them, favoring those featuring medals or tokens; and (4) present a ranked list of nominations to the editor of *The Shekel* (originally the late Edward Schuman, later Mel Wacks, now Simcha Kuritzky), who makes the final selection. This process has worked well.

However, as the list of first-time authors began to shrink, Mel and I decided to allow the award to be presented to the same person more than once. Also, in 2018 we selected William Rosenblum for the Odesser Award in recognition of his decades of cataloging of Judaic numismatics, though he did not submit any articles to *The Shekel* that year.

In recent years, the TAMS Board of Governors began to question whether TAMS should continue the Ben and Sylvia Odesser Award. In fact, in 2008 the Board voted to

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relinquish the award to AINA, but after the vote AINA proposed to make the Odesser Award a joint TAMS-AINA award, subject to the approval of both boards. After some discussion, in 2009 the Boards of both AINA and TAMS voted to present the Ben and Sylvia Odesser Award jointly and split the cost, and the first such award was presented at the TAMS Banquet at the Los Angeles ANA convention. The award plaque now has two medals, one from AINA and one from TAMS, making it even more beautiful and meaningful. I think that Ben would be pleased! 🔄

**Winners of the Sylvia Odesser/Ben and Sylvia Odesser
Award**

1979 Arnold Kagan	1993 Lance Campbell
1980 Rich Hartzog	1994 Dr. Gary P. Laroff
1981 Manfred Anson	1995 Shmuel Aviezer
1982 Stanley Yulish	1996 David Hendin
1983 Alan R. Weinberg	1997 Ed Janis (again)
1984 Howard M. Berlin	1998 Donna Sims
1985 Morton J. Zerder	1999 Dr. Alan H. Burghauser
1986 Robert D. Leonard Jr.	2000 Marvin Tameanko
1987 Julius Turoff	2001 Harold Musnitsky
1988 Ed Janis	2002 Edgar Guest
1989 Mel Wacks	2003 Marc A. Randolph, Esq.
1990 Edward Schuman	2004 Simcha Kuritzky
1991 Peter S. Horvitz	2005 Dr. Samuel Halperin
1992 Dr. Emanuel Smith	2006 Dr. Ira Rezak

Continued

2007 David L. Nathan, M.D.

2008 Ady Bar-Tov

2009 Stephen Fregger

2010 Daniel Friedenberg

2011 Saul B. Needleman,
Ph.D.

2012 Steven H. Kaplan

2013 Oded Paz

2014 Robert Messing

2015 Harvey A. Herbert

2016 Benjamin Weiss

2017 Dr. Ira Rezak (again) and
Tsadik Kaplan

2018 William Rosenblum
(special award)

2019 Otokar Dušek

2020 Dan Rudolph

2021 Dr. Ira Rezak (third time)

2022 Charles Catlett

2023 Steve and Ray Feller

2024 Aaron Oppenheim



Aaron Oppenheim (left), winner of the 2024 Odesser Award, and
Simcha Kuritzky (right), president of AINA.

LET MY PEOPLE GO! BADGES WITH THE NAMES OF PRISONERS OF ZION

By Dr. Vladimir Bernshtam

During the fight for the rights of Soviet Jews to live according to their traditions and for the right to repatriate to Israel, a significant role was played by the actions aimed at liberating those imprisoned in Soviet prisons and labor camps—known as the “Prisoners of Zion”. These individuals lost their freedom due to their desire to return to their historical homeland and unwavering struggle for this cause [1]. Human rights organizations organized demonstrations and rallies to support these people and provided material assistance to them and their families. The badges produced by these organizations became symbols of resistance, solidarity, and hope. Today, these items serve as a unique archive of stories and the names of those who stood on the front lines fighting for Soviet Jewry. They resurrect the memory of those who boldly advocated for the rights of Soviet Jews. Previously, the author wrote about the “Let My People Go” medallions [2 and 3], which were dedicated to the following prisoners of Zion: Anatoly Altman, Boris Azernikov, Yuri Brind, Hillel Butman, Shlomo Drezner, Mark Dymshits, Anatoly Goldfeld, Lassalle Kaminsky, Leib Khnokh, Mikhail Kornblit, Valeri Kukui, Eduard Kuznetsov, Semion Levit, Vladimir Markman, Iosif Mendelovich, Rayza Palatnik, Boris Penson, Yuri Vudka, Israel (Izia) Zalmanson, Sylva Zalmanson, и Wolf Zalmanson. These medallions were

Continued

distributed alongside leaflets urging help for the prisoners and their families. In this article, the author describes the badges and medals known to him, issued by human rights organizations in support of specific Jewish political prisoners in the Soviet Union. This current piece continues the author's papers describing and categorizing badges and medals related to the struggle for Soviet Jewry [2 - 8].

An entire group of various badges is dedicated to those Soviet Jews who the Soviet court convicted in connection with the "Dymshits–Kuznetsov aircraft hijacking affair", also known as "The First Leningrad Trial" or "Operation Wedding". It was an attempt to take a civilian aircraft on 15 June 1970 by a group of 16 Soviet refuseniks to escape to the West. Even though the effort was unsuccessful, it was a notable event during the Cold War because it drew international attention to human rights violations in the Soviet Union and resulted in the temporary loosening of emigration restrictions.

Silva Zalmanson, in addition to the two types of medallions described in articles [2 and 3], is dedicated to a badge issued by the Jewish Defense League (Fig. 1) and a medallion made in silver and gold colors (Fig. 2).

Continued



Fig. 1 Badge with a diameter of 6.5 cm.



Fig. 2 Medallions with a diameter of 3.5 cm.

The appearance of medallions dedicated to Sylva Zalmanson is associated with the organization ‘Group 35’ and the name of the famous Swedish actress Ingrid Bergman. ‘Group 35’ was organized in the United Kingdom during the trial of 35-year-old Reiza Palatnik, a librarian from Odessa who was convicted of Zionist activities. Initially, the group consisted of 35 British housewives, all around 35 years old, who, upon the advice of

Continued

Itzhak Rager, the emissary of 'Nativ' in London, decided to fight for Reiza. 'Group 35' received support from well-known women such as Jane Fonda and Ingrid Bergman. In March 1973, 'Group 35' invited Ingrid Bergman to London to draw public attention to Sylva Zalmanson's difficult situation. Ingrid actively participated in the fight for Sylva Zalmanson. Georges Weil, a world-renowned jeweler, designed a medallion with Sylva's name engraved inside the Star of David. Hundreds of these medallions were reproduced in silver, and a few special orders were made in gold. Ingrid Bergman was presented with a gold version. Many medallions were also made from non-precious metals, and painted in silver and gold color.



Fig. 3 "Group 35" badge.

Continued



Fig. 4 Ingrid Bergman with a medallion in honor of Sylva Zalmanson (photo from work [11]).

There is another badge (Fig. 5) dedicated to the prisoner of Sion Zalmanson, which, according to the author, can be attributed to any of the three Zalmansons convicted in the “airplane case”.



Fig. 5 Badge size 2.5x2.5 cm.

The badges shown in Figures 6 – 9 are dedicated to Altman, Kuznetsov, Mendelevich, and Penson, respectively, convicted in the “airplane case”.

Continued



Left to Right: Fig. 6 Badge size 2.5x2.5 cm.; Fig. 7 Badge size 2.5x2.5 cm.



Left to Right: Fig. 8 Badge with a diameter of 5.5 cm. The badge was issued by the organization “Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry” (SSSJ); Fig. 9 Badge size 2x3.5 cm.

The following group of badges and medals (Figs. 10–13) is dedicated to prisoner Sion Nathan Shcharansky. Nathan Shcharansky was born on January 20, 1948, in Donetsk, in the family of journalist Boris Shcharansky and economist Ida Milgrom. He studied at the Moscow Institute of Physics and

Continued

Technology and graduated in 1972. After completing his studies, he worked at the Institute of Oil and Gas in Moscow. Following a denial in 1973 to emigrate to Israel, motivated by security concerns, Shcharansky became one of the leaders of the Soviet Jewish refusenik movement. He authored numerous letters and appeals from Jewish activists to Soviet authorities and the international community regarding human rights violations, particularly those affecting Jews in the USSR. Shcharansky was one of the initiators of the Moscow Group for Monitoring Compliance with the Helsinki Accords in the field of human rights, known as the Helsinki Group. On March 15, 1977, Shcharansky was arrested on charges of espionage and treason against the homeland. On July 14, he was sentenced to 13 years of imprisonment. During his incarceration, he spent significant time in solitary confinement due to his protests against the prison administration's unlawful actions and conducted hunger strikes in protest. One of these hunger strikes lasted 110 days, during which he was subjected to force-feeding. His harsh sentence, courageous behavior during the investigation and imprisonment, and an active campaign for his release—where his wife, Avital Shcharansky, played a significant role—made his name known worldwide. Mass rallies and demonstrations in support of Shcharansky were held in the United States, Israel, and other Western countries. Special badges were produced and worn by participants in these protests.

Continued



Fig. 10. Badge “FREE SHCHARANSKY” (a diameter of 4.5 cm), The badge was issued by the organization “The *Greater New York Conference on Soviet Jewry*” (G.N.Y.C.S.J.).



Fig. 11. Badge “SAVE SHARANSKY NOW” (a diameter of 4.5 cm). Sharansky's last name is misspelled on this badge.

In 1983, the Magnes Museum commissioned a medal from the renowned medalist Alex Shagin, who had emigrated to the United States from the Soviet Union. The medal was dedicated to Anatoly Shcharansky [12]. On the obverse of the cast medal

Continued

created by Shagin is a profile of Nathan Shcharansky and his name, "Anatoly Shcharansky." The reverse side depicts a solitary figure surrounded by high walls, symbolizing not only Shcharansky's physical confinement but also the oppressive nature of life in the communist state. The artist included a hint of hope by showing an open sky above the walls, and to give this symbolic meaning, it is depicted in a hexagonal shape reminiscent of the Star of David. The medal has a diameter of 4.5 inches (11.43 cm) and a total of 250 medals were produced, each with a unique serial number.



Fig. 12

After international pressure and demonstrations on February 11, 1986, Sharansky was released from prison. He was stripped of Soviet citizenship and exchanged on the Glienicke Bridge, which connected West and East Berlin, for a Soviet spy arrested by the Americans. Sharansky immediately flew to Israel.

In 1986, both Natan Sharansky and his wife, Avital, were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in the United States for their dedication to the cause of human rights. The article by

Continued

Jack H Fisher provides detailed information about this medal [13]: "President Reagan presented two Congressional Gold Medals to Natan Shcharansky who accepted them in on behalf of his wife, Avital, and himself, at a White House ceremony on January 11, 1989. The Act of Congress is Public Law 99-298 that sets forth that the medals are in recognition of Natan and Avital Shcharansky's "supreme dedication and total commitment to the cause of individual human rights and freedom". The obverse of the medal features the portraits of Natan and Avital Shcharansky. Their names are inscribed around the border. It is noted that below the portraits are the words, "Act of Congress May 13, 1986". The reverse of the medal depicts the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem where people assemble for prayer and lamentation. The phrase, "Let My People Go", in Hebrew, Russian, and English appears beside the representation of the Wailing Wall on the medal. There is inscribed around the border the words, "Freedom of Thought, Conscience, Religion ... Helsinki Final Act." This medal recognizes that Mr. Shcharansky was a prominent founding member of the Moscow Helsinki Monitoring Group. The obverse design of the medal was designed and executed by Mr. James Licaretz, Sculptor/Engraver, United States Mint. The reverse themes of the medal were suggested by the Shcharansky family and friends, which were incorporated in the reverse design of the medal designed and executed by Mr. James Licaretz." The bronze duplicate medals of the Congressional Gold Medals honoring Natan (Anatoly) and Avital Shcharansky

Continued

were issued in a three-inch size (7.62 cm) and one-half-inch size (3.81 cm).



Fig. 13

The following 5 badges (fig. 14 – 18) are dedicated to five prisoners of Zion, whose brief biographies were borrowed by the author from the website [14].

Hillel Butman was born in 1932 in Leningrad. He was a prominent activist in the Jewish national movement in Leningrad during the 1950s and 1960s. In 1969, Butman began teaching Hebrew to Jewish youth groups after independently studying the language. He organized ulpanim (Hebrew language classes) with friends, focusing on Hebrew, Jewish history, and traditions. On June 15, 1970, he was arrested on charges related to his involvement with an underground Zionist organization, distributing anti-Soviet Zionist literature, and participating in the initial planning of an airplane hijacking and escape to Israel. He was sentenced to ten years in a strict regime labor camp.

Continued

Butman was released in 1979 and repatriated to Israel in the same year. He published autobiographical books in Russian, which were later translated into Hebrew and English. He passed away in May 2019.



Fig. 14. Badge size 2.5x2.5 cm.

David Chernoglaz (Maayan) was born in 1939 in Tsarskoye Selo (Pushkin, Leningrad Oblast). In his early youth, he rejected Soviet ideology and lifestyle, turning to Zionist beliefs. Between 1958 and 1960, he organized a student circle focused on studying Jewish history and collecting information about Israel. For these activities, he was detained by the KGB and expelled from the institute for “Jewish nationalism.” As part of his “re-education,” he was sent to the army. After returning from the military, he established a Zionist group that grew into an underground Zionist organization. He taught Jewish history and geography of Israel in ulpanim and distributed samizdat literature. Chernoglaz participated in the work of the All-Union Coordinating Committee, created in the USSR in 1969–70 to coordinate the activities of Zionist groups in various cities. In 1969, he applied for emigration to Israel but was denied. In 1970, he was arrested for Zionist activities and, following an

Continued

investigation, sentenced to five years in strict regime labor camps during the “Kishinev trial.” He was released in 1975 and soon repatriated to Israel.



Fig. 15. Badge size 2.5x2.5 cm.

The author knows two prisoners of Zion with the last name Korenblit. To whom the badge depicted in Figure 16 is dedicated, the author does not know. Therefore, the author deemed it appropriate to include information about both in this note.

Professor Lev Korenblit was born in Bessarabia (Romania) on the 13th of June, 1922. At age 10, he became an active member of the Zionist organization Gordonia, involved in Zionist propaganda. In 1940, after the Soviet occupation of Bessarabia, he went underground, organizing groups that studied Hebrew and Jewish history. During WWII he served in the Red Army. In the 1960s he became a Zionist activist in Leningrad and was elected to the Committee of the underground Zionist organization of Leningrad. In 1969-1970 he was an editor of the "samizdat" journal. He provided ideological support for the

Continued

Dymshitz group, which planned to hijack an aircraft in Leningrad. In 1970 he was arrested, together with the other members of the group, and in May 1971 at the 2nd Leningrad trial, he was sentenced to 3 years imprisonment. Released in 1973, he left for Israel within several weeks.

Michael Korenblit was Born on November 4th, 1937 in Ukraine. He worked as a dentist in Leningrad. The Six-Day War in 1967 and anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union led him to become aware of his Jewishness and the ideal of Zionism As an activist in the underground Zionist movement in the Soviet Union, he organized ulpanim for the study of Hebrew and the history of Jewish people, shared his knowledge of Zionism and the state of Israel with other people and also sent letters of protest to the Soviet authorities. Arrested in 1970 on the charge of Zionist anti-Soviet activity, he was sentenced at the 2nd Leningrad trial, in May 1971, to 7 years imprisonment in the Gulag. Released in 1977, he left for Israel in the same year.



Fig. 16. Badge size 2.5x2.5 cm.

Continued

Ida Nudel was born in 1931 in Novorossiysk. Ida graduated from university with a degree in economics and worked in various Soviet institutions in Moscow and the Urals. In 1970, she applied to emigrate from the USSR to Israel, which led to her dismissal from work and being sentenced to exile on charges of “malicious hooliganism.” The “hooliganism” consisted of Ida hanging a poster in her apartment window demanding to be allowed to go to Israel. While in exile, Ida collected information about the Prisoners of Zion and transmitted it to the West. After a wave of protests in the West, her exile term was reduced to four years. In 1987, she flew to Israel.

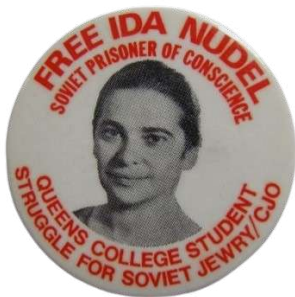


Fig. 17. “Free Ida Nudel”. The badge was issued by the organization “Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry” (SSSJ)

Alexander Yakir was born in 1955 in Moscow, into an assimilated family opposed to the existing regime. He first applied for permission to emigrate to Israel in 1973 with his family. The request was denied due to secrecy (his mother had

Continued

level 2 access to classified materials). He applied again for permission to emigrate separately from his parents in 1977 but was refused without explanation. He began his Zionist activities in 1977 after receiving a second refusal. He participated in collective appeals to the U.S. Congress and foreign media. He was arrested on June 18, 1984, on charges of “evasion of conscription for active military service.” The court, held on August 10, 1984, sentenced Yakir to 2 years in a general regime labor camp. After his release in December 1987, he emigrated to Israel.



Fig. 18

The author does not believe that he has managed to describe all the badges with the names of prisoners of conscience issued by human rights organizations and asks readers who have information about such badges or additional information about the badges described here to inform the author (fnbern@gmail.com). The author is grateful in advance to such readers. ▣

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

By Dr. Vladimir Bernshtam

In my article “COMMEMORATIVE MEDALS IN HONOR OF THE ANNIVERSARIES OF THE GREAT CHORAL OF ST. PETERSBURG” (2024 Shekel 2 Spring), I made an error in illustration 1. The medal depicted in it is thoroughly described in the article by Ira Rezak and Zvi Grilishes titled “TWO UNPUBLISHED GUENZBURG PIECES BY FATHER AND SON” (Journal of the Russian Numismatic Society, Number 67 Winter 1998-1999, pp. 63-65). ׀

This illustration should appear as follows:



THE TRIBUTE PENNY

By Mel Wacks

Excerpt from The Handbook of Biblical Numismatics, 45th
Anniversary Edition



The Tribute Penny. Engraving by Gustave Doré

In Jesus' time, there was a tax collected (tribute) for the Roman emperor, in addition to the numerous local Judaeen taxes. During one of these collections, Jesus said: "Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny (King James translation for a silver denarius). And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:19-21). The word "penny" was used instead of "denarius" (which was specified as *dēnarius* in the original Greek text), because the English penny was the

Continued

most commonly used silver coin at the time of the publication of the King James Bible (1611). The coin referred to is generally considered to be a silver Roman denarius featuring the likeness of the Emperor Tiberius (14-37 CE) on one side, and his mother Livia, seated on a throne, on the reverse. However, only a handful of 'Tiberius' denarii have been found in archaeological digs in the Holy Land — so perhaps the “Tribute Penny” was actually another coin type — such as the Roman denarius of Augustus Caesar with the Caius and Lucius Caesar reverse (2 BCE – 12 CE), as suggested by Rev. Peter Dunstan & Walter Holt (*The Tribute Penny Debate Revisited*, *The Celator*, October, 2006), and others. 📖



Emperor Tiberius, "The Tribute Penny," denarius, 14-37 CE.



Emperor Augustus, “Alternate Tribute Penny,” denarius, 2 BCE–12 CE.

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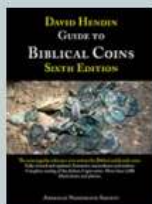
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Guide to Biblical Coins (6th ed.) by David Hendin

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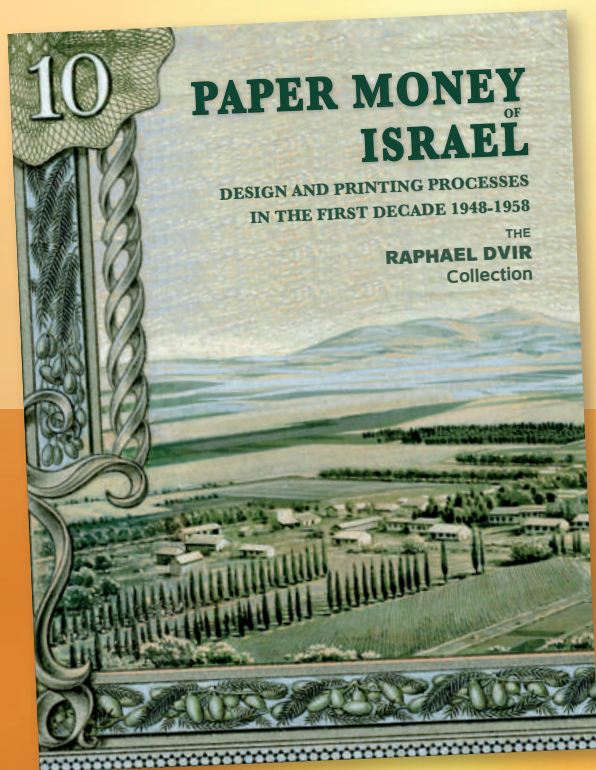
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